



Health & Safety

know your rights

Volume 2, Issue 5

The Peel Elementary Teachers' Local aspires to promote good health, safety preventive measures, and educate members on steps they should take to keep themselves safe at work.

STRESS DUE TO DISCRIMINATION

Adults who experience discrimination also report a higher level of stress, which, in turn, leads to poorer health. There is a large body of research that demonstrates the harmful effects that discrimination has on both mental and physical health.

The cumulative effects of discrimination can lead to PTSD, and predispositions of vulnerability, raise the stress base, which further exacerbates the cumulative experiences of discrimination.

While research into the health impacts of discrimination is somewhat limited, research does exist that shows that discrimination is an independent predictor of self-reported physical and mental health problems.

Discrimination also raises barriers to treatment and/or professional help, which can exacerbate the symptoms of PTSD. Additionally, a lack of awareness by health care practitioners can leave trauma or PTSD untreated.

If you are experiencing stress due to discrimination, please contact the Local and speak with your PETL liaison for support with your particular situation.

[PDSB Policy 51: Human Rights Policy](#)

[PDSB Workplace Harassment Procedure \(EHS 4.2\)](#)

DISCONNECTING FROM WORK

On December 2, 2021, the Ontario Provincial Government added new requirements to the *Employment Standards Act* requiring that [“employers that employ 25 or more employees ... have a written policy on disconnecting from work in place.”](#)

Disconnecting from work is defined as “not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, or sending or reviewing other messages, to be free from the performance of work.”

The PDSB currently has [guidelines](#) in place with time restrictions being placed on email for work-related communications.

HEAT STRESS

Heat stress is the increase in the body's core temperature above normal levels. A variety of factors such as high temperatures, humidity, etc. can lead to heat stress. Anyone with pre-existing health conditions such as asthma and heart problems are more vulnerable to heat stress.

Symptoms include heat rash, heat cramps, and fainting. In more extreme cases it can lead to heat exhaustion and even heat stroke.

Peel Public Health has set criteria for declaring a [Heat Alert and/or an Extreme Heat Alert](#).

If you feel the effects of heat stress, you should inform your principal of your concern in writing, asking them to investigate, so they can take any appropriate action as required.

Additional resources:

- [OHCOW Heat Stress Awareness Guide](#)
- [OHCOW Humidex-based Heat Stress Calculator](#)
- [PWGHS High Temperature Guideline Reference Chart](#)
- [PDSB Extreme Weather Guidelines \(EHS 2.14.12\)](#)

[MOL: Managing Heat Stress at Work](#)

BE SCENT AWARE GUIDELINES

Principals are expected to take a proactive approach to ensure the health and safety of all members, and that includes those with scent sensitivities. The Be Scent Aware poster should be displayed in key locations in your building.

There are a number of individuals who can experience a health crisis, absence, or even hospitalization when exposed to scented products. The PDSB is a "scent-free" workplace, and we are reminded to avoid using scented products that may have a negative health impact on others. They are not just limited to colognes and perfumes, but can include lotions, creams, soaps, laundry detergents, deodorants, among other things.

If you have a scent sensitivity, please ensure that you have notified your principal and work with them so they can take the appropriate steps to prevent avoidable exposures. If there is a health concern with a scent, report it to your principal so that immediate action may be taken to resolve the situation..

Should you have concerns with any of the above items, or any Health & Safety issues, please contact the Local and speak to your PETL liaison.